

## NOMINATION OF DAVID H. CHIPMAN

Mr. President, now on one final matter, the President has made an inexplicable choice in nominating David Chipman to head the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. This nominee has a long track record of open hostility to law-abiding Americans' Second Amendment rights. He is a loud, proud, would-be gun-grabber who has made it a personal mission to erode the Bill of Rights for the citizens of this country.

This is an especially awful time to be taking aim at Americans' right to keep and bear arms. Remember, as the political left has sought to vilify and defund the police across our country, homicides have, of course, surged. Last year's spike in the national murder rate was the steepest since, believe it or not, 1960.

So, as Democrats have made political war on the police, many citizens have started to think about self-protection. We have seen members of racial minority groups joining the parade of first-time gun owners in record numbers. But then Democrats don't like that either. Apparently, the left neither wants strong police forces, nor do they want Americans equipped for self-defense.

This nominee is unsuited enough for this job on policy merits, but somehow all this is just the tip of the iceberg of the concerns.

Mr. Chipman also comes with a distressing workplace reputation. Current and former ATF agents, once his colleagues, have described him as an "activist" and a "bully." Those are direct quotes. By one account, his policy views are "extreme" and his demeanor unsettling. I understand that just this week, even graver concerns have surfaced. According to one report, multiple ATF sources say there exists an internal complaint over racially insensitive comments allegedly made by the nominee in the workplace.

I don't expect that a Democratic President would pick somebody to run the ATF who will have our side of the aisle popping corks, but this is another level altogether.

Anyone who supports the Bill of Rights should oppose this nomination. There is no way this nominee is the best the Biden administration can do.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

## CORONAVIRUS

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I rarely come to the floor to directly respond to speeches given by my colleagues. I normally like to use the Chamber to make my own arguments on their merits rather than to make arguments against specific colleagues.

But yesterday I listened to a speech by Senator CRUZ of Texas, and it was one of the most dangerous speeches that I have ever heard given on the Senate floor, and it deserves a response.

Now, I understand that Republicans don't want to talk about the economy. They don't want to talk about the fact that we have had more jobs added to the economy in the first 5 months of President Biden's term than any other first-term President. I know they don't want to talk about the rapid expansion of the economy that is happening.

I understand Republicans don't want to talk about what we are debating on the Senate floor right now, which is the biggest bipartisan investment in infrastructure in the history of the country.

And I also understand that the Senator from Texas doesn't like the new guidance announced this week by the CDC. And he is not alone. From what I can tell, a lot of Republicans here are upset, as are a lot of nonpolitical Americans. Nobody likes to wear a mask. Nobody likes that the new recommendation is that some Americans need to wear them. Again, I don't like wearing a mask. I hate it. My kids hate the masks more.

But here is what the CDC said. The CDC's scientists have been carefully following this dramatic increase in cases that we have seen all across the country as the Delta variant spreads, even through vaccinated people. First, we can't ignore this, the fact that there has been this huge increase in cases. The national 7-day average is triple what it was from a month ago. We are averaging 40,000 new cases a day.

This is a big problem, and it is overwhelming parts of our healthcare system. Now, I wish this weren't the case, but it requires us to think about adjusting policy.

Second, the CDC is looking at this new evidence that indicates that even fully vaccinated individuals who become infected with the Delta variant can carry the virus and transmit it to others, even if they don't get sick. Now, this latest development is important because it allows the Delta variant, the more contagious variant, to spread faster. Early information from the CDC shows that the Delta variant is as contagious as the chickenpox, more contagious than earlier strains of COVID.

And, remember, not every American today is vaccinated. For instance, my youngest son is 9 years old. He can't get vaccinated. If the evidence suggests that I can transmit the virus to him, even if my vaccine prevents me from getting really sick, then that matters.

Finally, with so many Americans still unvaccinated, the virus still has plenty of bodies in which to mutate. Right now, the good news is that we have got three authorized COVID-19 vaccines that are pretty effective against severe illness. But the worry is

that eventually the vaccine is going to mutate into a version of itself that is resistant to the current vaccines. And with so many Americans choosing to stay unvaccinated and evidence suggesting that vaccinated people who are infected with the Delta variant can transmit it to people who are unvaccinated, the CDC has concluded that, right now, we need to take additional steps to cut down on the pathways that the virus has to spread and keep mutating before it is too late, and we have a virus that our vaccines don't work against at all.

Now, what does the new guidance say? It recommends that fully vaccinated people wear a mask in public indoor settings, in places in the country where there are a lot of cases. And since most young kids aren't vaccinated, the CDC is also recommending that, when school opens, teachers and kids should wear masks.

That is the argument that the CDC is making. That is the evidence upon which they have issued their new guidance. And it is perfectly legitimate to contest the CDC's decision or the reasons that they gave for making the decision. It is OK for anybody in this body to disagree with the conclusions that they reach.

But that is not what Senator CRUZ did yesterday. He didn't come to the floor and argue against the merits of the CDC's argument. No. In fact, not once during the speech—and I watched the whole speech—did he ever reference the actual reasons for the CDC's new guidance, not once.

In fact, he claimed that the CDC offered no explanation. At one point, after mischaracterizing the CDC's announcement, he asked rhetorically why the CDC changed the guidance. "Who knows?" he said. Anyone who listened to that speech or, frankly, many other speeches that are being given by Republicans all across Capitol Hill this week would logically come to the conclusion that the CDC had offered not a single explanation for the new guidance.

Then, after creating the impression that the CDC didn't have any reasons for the new recommendation, the Senator from Texas announced that he had discovered the reason. He said that the real reason the CDC changed their guidance was because the CDC is "an arm of the Democratic National Committee" and that Democrats in Congress are "faithful little foot soldiers" of the CDC.

He offered no explanation as to why it would benefit Democrats politically or the DNC or the CDC to recommend mask wearing. He just simply claimed that the CDC was a political puppet of the DNC and the guidance was politically motivated.

The closest he came to a more detailed explanation of this claim was when he talked about the school guidance. There the Senator from Texas claimed, without any evidence, that the only reason the CDC made this decision was because it was demanded by